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Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Seventh session
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Item 6 of the provisional agenda*
Half-day discussion on the Pacific

Recommendations on the half-day discussion on the Pacific

1. The Pacific region is home to a diverse range of indigenous peoples, who speak 19 per cent of the world's estimated more than 6,000 languages. Indigenous peoples in the Pacific Islands are still linked to their communal land, indigenous belief systems, spirituality and customary law, which form the social, economic and political basis for peaceful coexistence.

2. Indigenous peoples in the Pacific region face a range of challenges because they are living in sensitive zones where the effects of climate change are most devastating. The region is subjected to the impact of global warming, caused by excessive fossil fuel burning, atmospheric pollution and deforestation of the land. Many small island States do not have access to and do not benefit from the transfer of technology. Migration is another issue. Many indigenous peoples are either migrating to other countries in the region or are experiencing the intrusion of migrants on their indigenous territories. Furthermore, many indigenous peoples are becoming environmental refugees, which is a serious and pressing issue.

3. The Permanent Forum notes the urgent need for technical assistance and development cooperation in the Pacific region in order to build the capacity of Pacific Island nations to implement human rights standards and develop local institutions to promote human rights. This should be accompanied by efforts to promote increased ratification of human rights treaties within the region and their domestic implementation.

4. The Permanent Forum recommends that the Pacific States endorse and implement the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

5. The Permanent Forum recommends that an expert seminar be held, without financial implications, and invites the participation of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Special Committee on Decolonization, to examine the impact of the United Nations decolonization process on indigenous

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peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories which are now or have been listed on the United Nations list of Non-Self-Governing Territories. The Permanent Forum requests that independent experts and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples be invited to participate in the seminar. Furthermore, the Forum requests that indigenous peoples under Non-Self-Governing Territories status also be invited.

6. The Permanent Forum urges United Nations bodies and specialized agencies to implement the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

7. The Permanent Forum expresses its concern for the human rights of indigenous peoples in the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Pacific region and calls on the United Nations Human Rights Council to designate a Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Indigenous Peoples of those territories.

8. The Permanent Forum invites the Special Rapporteur on the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples to examine and report on the situation of the human rights of indigenous peoples in Non-Self-Governing Territories of the Pacific region and urges relevant States to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur for that purpose.

9. The Permanent Forum is concerned that the regional presence, representation and services of United Nations agencies in the Asia-Pacific region are limited mostly to the Asian subregion and recommends that all United Nations agencies review their operations to provide equal services to the Pacific subregion and that they identify their operations separately according to the two subregions.

10. The Permanent Forum decides to appoint, without financial implications, Hassan Id Balkassm and Paimaneh Hasteh as Special Rapporteurs to undertake a study to determine whether climate change policies and projects adhere to the standards in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and that the Human Rights Council expert mechanism on the rights of indigenous peoples and the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues be invited to participate in the study and requests they provide the Permanent Forum with an outline of the study at its eighth session and a report thereon at its ninth session.

11. The Permanent Forum calls on the World Bank to activate the *2005 Extractive Industries Review* in order to address the impact and legacy of extractive industries on indigenous lands, territories and resources.

12. The Permanent Forum invites the Chairman of the Special Committee to report on the decolonization process within the Pacific region to the Permanent Forum at its eighth session in 2009.

13. The Permanent Forum recommends that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees ensure a significant focus on refugee issues in the Pacific region, giving particular attention to the vulnerability of indigenous peoples in that region.